

The Trial of Jesus

Good morning this is radio Jerusalem, broadcasting once again live and on the scene. Right now we are standing on the balcony at the Governor's palace waiting for a political prisoner to be brought in for trial. The Sanhedrin has notified Pilate that they want him to try this prisoner today. He was arrested late last night and taken to Caiaphas the High Priest, and then the Sanhedrin met hurriedly this morning again and they are bringing charges against him. This man is Jesus of Nazareth sometimes referred to by his followers as Jesus Christ. There is an overflow crowd here this morning and the noise is growing louder and louder. Perhaps you can hear it in the background. There is a sense of something big about to happen. It's like the promise of a storm in the air, you can feel that something unusual is about to take place. The crowd seems to be in a sense of expectation. The rumor that has been passed around today is that this prisoner is to be crucified. The Governor, Pontius Pilate has been given personal orders by the emperor to make an example of some of these Jews and the uprisings against Roman authority will cease. So perhaps this prisoner will be the start of this trend.

I don't know whether you can hear it or not, but I can see this ^{new} Jesus being escorted through this crowd by a guard of Roman soldiers, followed by the Jewish council, the Sanhedrin. The crowd is booing and hissing. Some of them are pushing toward him and were it not for the extra guards placed inside this courtyard, this man would probably never make it up to where we are standing. He is dressed quite simply and he looks rather tired. In another few moments they should all be standing here in front of Pilate. There come the guards now followed by the prisoner, and followed close behind by the scribes, chief priests and pharisees. Now that they are all here, Pilate is consulting with the Chief Priests. He has just asked what this man has done. The answer they have given is that he has stirred up the people throughout the land beginning in Galilee and stretching ^{now} to Jerusalem. Pilate has just asked if this Jesus is a Galilean? If this is true then this prisoner should have been brought before Herod. The Chief Priests have affirmed this and Pilate has just ordered that Jesus be taken to Herod.

The Chief Priests are arguing with Pilate about this but he has walked away from them and the guards have been ^{GIVEN} orders to take the prisoner to Herod. ^{HEROD JUST HAPPENS TO BE HERE FOR THIS FEAST} We are now moving through the courtyard toward Herod's ^{RESIDENCE} palace. This mob is quite large and unruly. we are moving very slowly and the courtyard guards are having a difficult time keeping the crowd back. Now we have finally left the courtyard and are headed toward Herod's ^{HOME} palace. The guards are hurrying this job along. It almost seems as though they want to hurry up and be done with this assignment. We are now inside Herod's ^{HOUSE} palace and in the receiving room of the king. Herod is seated at the far end of the room and Jesus is being led toward him. Herod is questioning him, but as yet he has said nothing. ^{HE IS ONE COOL INDIV.} The Chief Priests are making the accusation to Herod and Herod seems sort of amused by the scene which is taking place before him. He just sits there with a half smile on his face. Herod's guards are mocking Jesus and now one of them has taken a purple robe and placed it on him, much to the delight of Herod and his men. Now Herod has ordered that the prisoner be taken back to Pilate, and once again the Chief Priests are angry and arguing now with Herod. This trial is taking on the aspects of a circus. Were it not for the fact that a man's life is at stake it would be hilarious. Now we are leaving Herod's ^{PLACE} palace and once again headed for the palace of Pilate.

Now we have to go through this mob again and it seems to have doubled since we passed through it before. We are caught in the crush of this crowd and Jesus is being pushed and shoved by the guards to get him through this mob. We are finally on the balcony again and once again Pilate is questioning Jesus, but again he has said nothing. Pilate has just asked him if he knows the seriousness of the charges brought against him and again no answer. It is quite evident that Pilate is overwhelmed by his silence.

It has been the custom during this feast that Pilate releases a prisoner that the people choose and he has just asked if it should be Jesus or Barabas. The crowd is shouting, we want Barabas. Some of the Scribes and Pharisees are sprinkled throughout this crowd and they can be seen leading the chant and inciting the mob to follow suit.

Now Pilate has just asked what is to be done with Jesus. The crowd is shouting all the louder, crucify him, crucify him. Perhaps you can hear it in the background. Pilate has now asked why Jesus should be crucified that he has found no evil or wrong in him, and the noise is deafening. The Chief Priests are arguing very strongly with Pilate. The crowd is shouting as if it were one voice crucify him, crucify him. It certainly would be unsafe for anyone to be in that mob and not be in favor of this execution.

Now Pilate is washing his hands in a basin of water, which is symbolic of meaning that he is innocent of the blood of this man. He has given orders that Barabas is to be released and Jesus is to be scourged then crucified. We are now moving from the balcony to the guards quarters where this scourging will take place. Scourging is a very cruel form of torture. The victim is stripped of his robe and tied to a pole so that his bare back is to the one administering the lash. The lash is a leather thong studded at intervals with pieces of bone and pellets of lead. It causes the naked back to become strips of raw flesh and bleeding welts. Some men have died while this was taking place, and others have lost their sanity. We are in the courtyard where Jesus is being led to the pole. He has now been stripped of his robe and is tied to the pole.

He has remained mute throughout all of this except to answer Pilate once. When Pilate asked him if he was the King of the Jews, he answered "It is you who say it." Since then he has said nothing. The scourging is now underway and has been while we were talking, and it is torture to even witness this, let alone be the victim of it. He is now being untied and he is sort of semi-conscious, rather limp and not self-supporting. The guards are holding him up now and leading him to the other end of this courtyard. They have once again placed a purple robe on him along with a crown fashioned out of thorns. The thorns have dug into his scalp and the blood is running down his head and face. They are bowing to him and saying, Hail king of the Jews. Now they have finished their sport and have put his own robe on him and are leading him out of the courtyard. He will be given the cross beam of his cross to carry up the hill

of Golgotha. The upright is already there awaiting the arrival of the condemned man. The soldiers have thrust the beam on his shoulders and he is struggling to maintain his footing under the weight of it. He is staggering as we are starting down the street. He looks as though he may fall at any minute. There he has just fallen and the guards are prodding him to get him on his feet. It doesn't look as though he can carry this beam. Wait one of the guards has pulled a man from the crowd lining the streets and he must carry the beam. This is all legal since Palestine is an occupied country, ^{and} the Romans can press anyone into service they need.

We are now approaching the crest of the hill and I see there are two other criminals already hanging on their crosses. They are ready to drive the nails and Jesus has been offered the drugged wine to deaden the pain, but he has refused it. Now he has been fastened to his cross and the torture really begins for him. It is around nine in the morning and that sun is really beginning to get warm. Around one or two the heat would almost be unbearable hanging there.

Crucifixion originated in Persia. The earth was considered as being sacred to the God Ormuzd. Therefore the criminal was lifted ^{so} up that he would not defile the earth. The Romans brought it from Carthage. This form of execution is ^{used} ~~used~~ by the Romans on rebels, runaway slaves and the lowest type of criminal. It is illegal for a Roman citizen to be crucified. What happens during this type of execution is that the victim is already fairly weak from the severe beating he has been given and then he is nailed to this cross to die a slow and agonizing death of hunger and thirst. The usual length of time is anywhere from four to six days for the victim to die. However this execution will be over before six this evening. At six the Jewish Sabbath begins and it is not permitted that these criminals be left hanging here. So if they are still alive at around five they will be killed by the guards.

The guards are seated on the ground near the crosses. They are playing dice for the clothing of this Jesus. They are certainly a hardened group of men to endure this horrible form of execution. But then they have been in many battles probably and are used to seeing men die.

5.
THERE IS AN INSCRIPTION ABOVE THE CROSS JESUS KING OF THE JEWS.

The people who are watching this have been shouting insults up to this man. They are telling him to save himself as he did others. It appears though Jesus is trying to say something. His lips are parched and swollen and it is difficult to hear. He has ^{JUST} said Father, forgive them for they know not what they do. This has drawn a lot of hoots and catcalls as you can probably hear. Even the other two thieves are hurling insults at him. Perhaps I should qualify that statement and say one of them is. The other is defending this Jesus. He has requested that Jesus remember him when he gets to his kingdom. And the strange answer has come back, "Today you shall be with me in paradise." ^{IMAGINE THAT?} He has glanced down and seen his mother standing there with one of his followers and he has told the disciple to look after her. He has now said, "My God My God why have you forsaken me?" The onlookers here are really laughing at this remark. He has spoken it in Aramaic and they think he is calling for Elijah.

It is now close to three in the afternoon and from all appearances this Jesus does not look as though he will last too much longer. He has just said that he is thirsty, and one of the merciful guards has handed up a sponge with vinegar on it. These fellows really know how to conduct an execution.

It sounded like he said, "It is finished." or something like that. The sky has become overcast and the air is beginning to move again. It looks like a spring thunderstorm is in the offing. I think the end is very near for this man. In fact he is now staring up to the sky and he has just said, "Father into your hands, I commend my spirit." And his head has dropped onto his chest. ^{YES HE IS} At the exact moment that he died there was one great flash of lightning and it has terrified almost everyone here. The Roman centurion who has been stationed at this cross has just made the remark that this truly must have been the son of God. I don't know, this is certainly puzzling and arouses the curiosity. Oh, Samuel will you see that this equipment gets taken back to the station? Well I must run an errand. If you must know I want to look up one of those fellows who were with this man. There are some questions I need answered. Let us pray.

The Trial and Death of Jesus

Good morning, this is radio Jerusalem. Once again we are at the scene of a very important event. As usual we will be bringing you all of the live coverage directly from the scene. We are situated at the present time on the balcony of the Governor's palace awaiting the arrival of a political prisoner. This man has been a local trouble maker for a period of approximately three years. He has been in trouble with the authorities from time to time, but on each occasion there has never been sufficient evidence to hold him. However I have learned from a very reliable source that this time he has gone too far. The Sanhedrin had him arrested late last night and when he was taken before Caiaphas the High Priest it was determined that the evidence was sufficient to hold him. The Sanhedrin met rather hurriedly this morning and have asked for Pilate to try this man today. The basic reason for this is due to the fact that the execution, if there is to be one, must be over by sundown. The Sanhedrin feel they have enough against this man to warrant asking for the death penalty. We will just have to wait and see what transpires. Perhaps while we are waiting his arrival I can fill in with some of the basic details surrounding this man's background.

The man to be tried is called Jesus and is often referred to as Christ. Whether he is deserving of the title is anyone's guess. But he was born about 33 years ago under some very strange circumstances. It has been rumoured that his birth was heralded by a star and by angels, and that kings came to pay him homage and all this took place in a mere stable. To top it off it is also rumoured that he is an illegitimate child and Joseph is not his father at all. But for the last three years he has been roaming the countryside preaching and teaching about God. He is supposed to have healing powers, and he even raised a man from the dead or so the story goes. He has run afoul of the authorities mainly because he preaches a different kind of religion than is preached in the Synagogue. But what has really set the Jewish authorities on him is the fact that from time to time he has claimed to be the Son of God. And this I understand is the main charge to be brought against him this morning.

The courtyard below me is packed with people. I don't think you

it is very difficult to try pushing through them. The guards have finally made a path and we are proceeding to Herod's palace. The way the guards are moving since have gotten out of the courtyard, it seems as though they are in a hurry to get this job done. We have now reached the receiving room of the king and Jesus is being led toward him. He is seated on a rather massive chair at the far end of the room. Now that Jesus is standing before Herod, the king is asking him questions. So far Jesus has said nothing. Not one single word. I tell you listeners that this is one cool individual. The chief priests are making their accusation and Herod almost seems as though he is amused by this entire scene. He is just sitting there with a half smile on his face. Herod's guards are now mocking Jesus and now one of them has placed a purple robe on him and I do believe that Herod is enjoying this as much as his men. It seems as though Herod has had enough of this foolishness and he has now ordered the chief priests to return the prisoner to Pilate. And once again the chief priests are arguing with Herod. This trial is taking on the aspect of a circus. Were it not for the fact that a mans life is stake this would be hilarious. We are once again heading toward the palace of Pilate. It seems as though Pilate is the only one with the authority to order the death penalty, and this is what the chief priests have been demanding.

We are ready to pass through this mob again, and it looks almost as though it has doubled since we came through it the last time. Maybe you can hear the taunts and jeers of some of them. The noise is deafening. We are caught in the crush and the guards are having a difficult time ^{clearing} ~~making~~ a path. Now, we have started to move and in a few moments we will be before Pilate again. At last we have reached the balcony and Pilate is again questioning Jesus. But as before he has said nothing. Pilate has asked if he knows the seriousness of the charges brought against him, and again no answer. It has become quite apparant that Pilate is overwhelmed by his silence.

One old custom has been observed during the feast, and this is the custom of Pilate releasing a prisoner whom the people choose. He has now asked if they wanted Jesus or Barrabas released. The crowd is chanting, "We want Barrabas, we want Barrabas." Perhaps you can hear them. I have noticed that some of the scribes and Pharisees are scattered throughout this crowd and they can be

seen chanting and encouraging the crowd to do likewise. Now Pilate has asked what is to be done with Jesus. The crowd is shouting, "Crucify him, crucify him." Pilate has asked the question, why this man should be crucified since he has found no evil in him. The shouting has now risen to a fever pitch and this crowd is one step away from mob violence. They are shouting louder and louder, "Crucify him, crucify him, away with him." The noise is simply deafening if you can hear it in the background. The chief priests meanwhile continue to argue with Pilate. I tell you I would not want to be down on that crowd and not be in favor of this execution. It simply would not be safe.

Pilate has now resorted to a dramatic gesture. He is publicly washing his hands to signify that he is innocent of Jesus blood. He has now issued orders that Barabbas is to be released and that Jesus is to be scourged and then executed. Once again we are moving from the balcony, but this time to the guards quarters downstairs, where the scourging will take place. Scourging as most people know is a rather cruel form of torture. The victim is stripped of his robe and tied to a pole so that his naked back is to the one administering the lash. The lash itself is a leather thong studded at intervals with pieces of bone and pellets of lead. It causes the back to become strips of raw flesh and bleeding welts. Some men have been known to die from this beating, others have lost their sanity, and in most instances the victim loses consciousness. Jesus is now being tied to the pole after the removal of his robe.

This is truly a remarkable man. He has remained mute throughout all of this except to answer Pilate once. When Pilate asked him if he was indeed the king of the Jews, he answered, "It is you who say it." Since then he has said nothing. The scourging is now underway and has been while we were talking. It is torture to even witness this let alone be the victim of it.

The guards are now removing the ropes and he seems to be semi-conscious. He is rather limp and his legs are wobbly. The guards are supporting him for the moment. Once again the guards are having their fun. The purple robe has been placed upon him along with a crown fashioned out of thorns. The thorns have dug into his forehead and face and the blood is streaming down his face. They are bowing to him and saying, "Hail king of the Jews." Now that they have finished

with their sport, they are leading him out into the courtyard. Here he will be the cross beam of his cross to carry up the hill of Golgotha. The upright is already there awaiting the arrival of the condemned man. The soldiers have now thrust the beam upon his shoulders and he is struggling to maintain his footing under the weight of it. This would be a tremendous task for a well man, but this man has just received a terrific beating at the hands of the ~~Romans~~ Romans who know how to administer a beating and do it ~~we~~ thoroughly. He appears as though he may fall at any minute. Wait, he has ~~just~~ just fallen and is struggling to regain his feet. The guards are prodding him to get him started again. It seems like it is hopeless for the man seems unable to continue. The guards have now pulled a man from the crowd and he is carrying the beam for Jesus. This is all very legal and since Palestine is occupied the Romans can press anyone into service they need.

Lets see if we can get some opinions along the way here. You sir, are you in favor of this execution. You are. May I ask why? Because you feel he is guilty. How about you sir? Do you think this man deserves to die? You think that he does because nobody could be as good as he was supposed to have been. Well thats a different angle. We better push on through here as the procession has now reached the crest of the hill above us. Directly ahead we can see the vacant upright set between two other crosses which are already occupied. The prisoner has now been offered the drugged wine to deaden the pain, while the nails are being driven. But he has refused it. A truly remarkable man I must repeat. He is now being fastened to his cross and the torture really begins for him. The time right now is 9:00 A.M. and the sun is beginning to get warm.

The execution by crucifixion began in Persia. The earth was considered to be sacred to the god Ormuzd. Therefore the criminal was lifted up so that he would not defile the earth. The Romans brought it from Carthage. This form of execution is used by the Romans on criminals, rebels, runaway slaves and the lowest type of criminals. It is illegal for a Roman citizen to be crucified. What usually happens during this type of execution is that the victim is fairly weak from the beating he has been given and then he is nailed to the cross to

die a slow and agonizing death, of hunger and thirst. The usual length of time is anywhere from four to six days. for the victim to die. However this execution will be over before six this evening. At six the Jewish sabbath begins and it is not permitted that these criminals be left hanging here. So if they are still alive around five they will be killed by the guards.

The guards right now are seated on the ground near the crosses. They are presently playing dice for the clothing of this Jesus. They are indeed a hardened group of men to endure this horrible execution. But they have probably been in many battles and have become accustomed to death in many forms.

There is an inscription above the cross that reads, "Jesus King of the Jews." The people have been watching this and are shouting insults up to this man. They are telling him to come down from the cross. To save himself as he did others. It appears as though he is trying to say something, but his lips are parched and swollen and it is difficult to hear. Perhaps if I tried to get a little closer. He has just said, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." This has drawn a lot of hoots and catcalls which you can probably hear. Even one of the thieves is hurling insults at him. The other one is defending Jesus. He has asked Jesus to remember him when he gets to his kingdom. The reply is, "Today you will be with me in paradise." Imagine that. Now he has glanced down and spied his mother, and to one of his followers he has spoken to take care of her. With a tortured look toward the sky he has cried, "My God My God, why have you forsaken me?" The people are laughing at jeering at this since it seems they misunderstood his remark. He spoke in Aramaic and they think he is calling for Elijah.

The time now is close to three in the afternoon and the sun is burning with an intense heat atop this hill. He appears as though he will not last too much longer. He has just said that he is thirsty, and the guards have handed up a sponge with vinegar. These fellows really know how to conduct an execution. It sounded as though he cried it is finished, or something like that. The sky has become very overcast and it appears as though a spring storm is in the offing. I think the end is very near for this man. In fact he is staring

Good Friday April 12, 1968

MINE

Processional Hymn 153 (stand on last v.)

*Solemn Declaration

*Call to Worship

*Invocation

Responsive Reading Sel 30 Page 580

Hymn 164

Scripture Mark 15: 1-39

*Gloria Patri

*Pastoral Prayer & Choral Response

Anthem

Announcements

Offering & Offering Prayer

*Hymn 158

Good Friday Monologue

"The Trial of Jesus"

Prayer & Lord's Prayer

*Hymn 161

*Benediction

*Threefold Amen

*Postlude

St. John's United Church of Christ
Emlenton, Pennsylvania

Good Friday, April 12, 1968

Prelude **"A Lenten Meditation"** - Ralsey

"The Sorrowing Savior" - Kenny

Processional Hymn 158

Congregation Stand on Last Verse

Solemn Declaration

Call to Worship

Invocation

Responsive Reading Selection No. 30, Page 580

Hymn 164

Scripture Mark 15: 1-39

Gloria Patri

Pastoral Prayer and Choral Response

Anthem **"It Was I"** - Moffatt

"Shall I Crucify Him?" - Ellis

Offering

Offertory

Hymn 153

Good Friday Monologue

"The Trial of Jesus" - Mr. Ralph Link

Prayer and Lord's Prayer

Hymn 161

Benediction

Threefold Amen

Postlude **"Postludium"** - Nordman

Congregation Stand



A Community Sunrise Service will be held at the Emlenton Athletic Field on Easter Sunday morning, April 14, 1968 at 7 AM. Alternate location in case of inclement weather will be the Columbia Gas Garage. A Children's Choir, directed by Mrs. Roberta Newton, will sing.

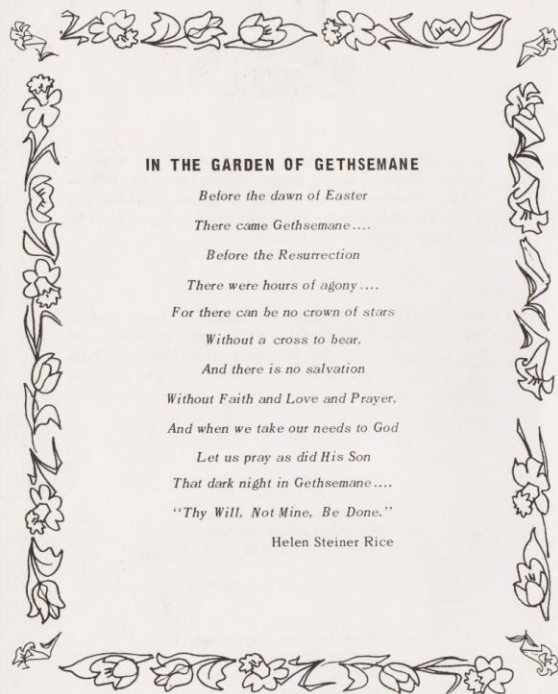
An Easter Cantata, **"Beyond The Cross"** by James Moffatt, will be presented by the Junior Choir, under the direction of Mrs. Larry Zinchini, in the St. John's United Church of Christ on Saturday evening, April 13th at 7:30 PM. The public is cordially invited to attend.

*We all have our Gethsemanes
And our daily Cross to bear
And we, too, have a Father
We can go to with our care...
A Father who will Is*

*We all have our Gethsemanes
And or*

*We all have our Gethsemanes
And our daily Cross to bear
And we, too, have a Father
We can go to with our care...
A Father who will listen
As He listened to His Son,
And give us strength to carry on
Until life's work is done.*

Helen Steiner Rice



IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE

*Before the dawn of Easter
There came Gethsemane....
Before the Resurrection
There were hours of agony....
For there can be no crown of stars
Without a cross to bear,
And there is no salvation
Without Faith and Love and Prayer,
And when we take our needs to God
Let us pray as did His Son
That dark night in Gethsemane....
"Thy Will, Not Mine, Be Done."*

Helen Steiner Rice

GOOD FRIDAY

By the fruit of a tree man was overcome; sin destined Adam and all men to a life of alienation from God. Now by the tree of the cross Christ has overcome sin as our Substitute. Man is reconciled to God; as the tree of the cross gives Jesus' body up to the tomb, God's act of redeeming love for us is finished!

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